

The First Part of a New Volume.



ENTERED AT STATIONER'S HALL.

SOME COTGREAVE LIBRARY AIDS.

A FEW TESTIMONIALS.

THE INDICATOR.

"*Library Construction, Architecture, Fittings, and Furniture.*"
By F. J. BURGoyNE. 1897.

"The Cotgreave Indicator is that in use in the majority of the British Free Libraries."

"*The Free Library: Its History and Present Condition.*" By J. J. OGLE. 1897.

"The Recording Indicator is almost certainly the invention of Mr. A. Cotgreave (Public Libraries, West Ham, London, E.,) and is that most largely used."

"THE SCOTSMAN."

"All the London Free Public Libraries (except one or two which do not use indicators), have adopted the Cotgreave System, which has been found to work well."[†]

N.B.—See also "Greater London," by E. Walford, M.A., F.S.A. (page 360); "Methods of Social Reform," by Prof. W. Stanley Evans, M.A., F.R.S., LL.D.; "Public Libraries," by T. Greenwood, F.R.G.S.; &c., &c.

* As a matter of fact it will be found in about nine-tenths of the Libraries using indicators. Over 300 Institutions are now using it.

† Sixty-two Public Libraries in London and the Metropolitan area are using it.

MAGAZINE RACKS.

"FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY, WANDSWORTH.

The Cotgreave Magazine Rack has been in use in the news-room here since the opening of the Library. I can unhesitatingly speak of its value, for it greatly tends to keep the tables tidy. Being so compact it takes up little room, and a reader can see at a glance the periodical he wishes to read.*

C. T. DAVIS, Secretary and Librarian."

* The Cotgreave Racks are in use at some 50 Libraries and Literary Institutions, from which similar testimonials have been received.

THE CONTENTS-SUBJECT INDEX, TO GENERAL AND PERIODICAL LITERATURE.

Price to Subscribers, 7s. 6d.

(500 copies have already been subscribed for.—See List).

"DAILY NEWS."

"A 'Contents-Subject Index to General and Periodical Literature' would, properly done, be a great time-saving machine. Such a work is being undertaken by Mr. A. Cotgreave. The first part, which is now before us, is distinctly promising. It will be helpful to many students and readers."

"DUBLIN REVIEW."

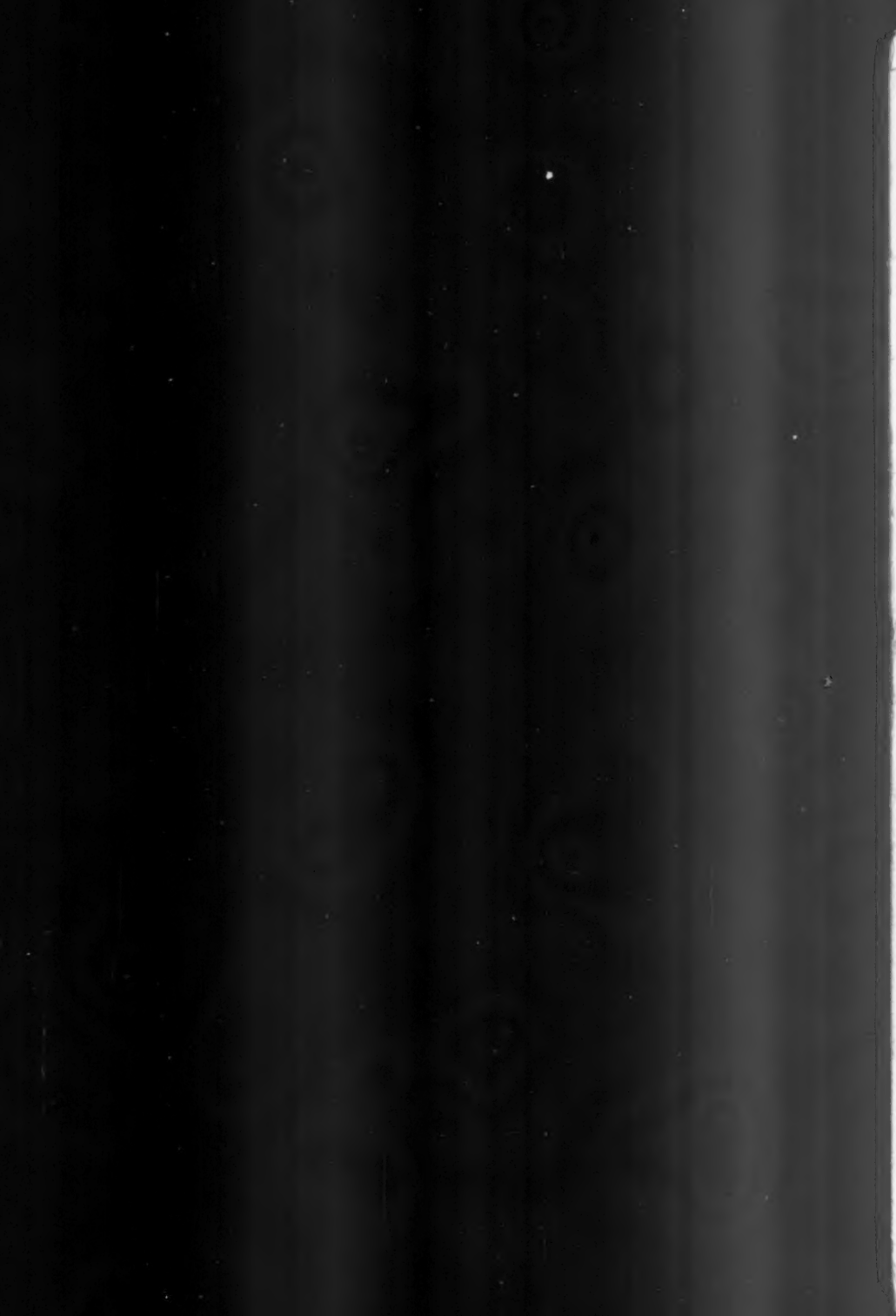
"The Editor of the 'DUBLIN REVIEW' (Canon Moyes), desires me to thank you for the specimen of the 'Contents-Subject Index,' and to say that he has formed a high opinion of it, in fact he has already found it useful."

T. W. HUNTER, Librarian, Archbishop's House, Westminster."

Similar expressions of opinion have been received from a large number of leading journals, and from many well known English and American Librarians.

N.B.—The Contents-Subject Index will be supplied to all Library Assistants at a reduced price, if applied for before publication.

Full particulars of the above and also of other Library Aids sent upon application.



The Library Assistant:

The Official Organ of the Library Assistants' Association.

VOL. II.

OCTOBER, 1899.

No. 1.

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANTS' ASSOCIATION.

FOUNDED 1895. FIFTH SESSION. YEAR 1899-1900.

Members are requested to carefully read the announcements appearing on this page, as no further intimation of meetings and other arrangements will be sent out.

WINTER PROGRAMME.

The first meeting of the Fifth Session will take place at 8 p.m. on Wednesday, 11th October, at the residence of Wynne E. Baxter, Esq., J.P., D.L., at No. 170, Church Street, Stoke Newington, at 8 p.m., when Mr. Baxter will exhibit a collection of early editions of the works of John Milton, and will read a paper describing them. The Rev. Prebendary Shelford, M.A., J.P., Rector of Stoke Newington, and Chairman of the Library Commissioners, has kindly consented to take the chair, and previous to the meeting, at 7.30 p.m., Mr. G. Preece, the Librarian, will shew the Stoke Newington Public Library to any one desirous of inspecting it.

Route: "Favourite" 'bus from Victoria, via Charing Cross and Gray's Inn Road, passes the door; or trains to Dalston Junction (N.L.R.), and thence by tram to Church Street.

The report of the adjudicators in the "Greenwood 1899" prize essay scheme will be presented at this meeting, and it is hoped that there will be a good attendance of members and friends.

The second meeting will be held on the second Wednesday in November at Cripplegate, and the prize essays on "How I would organise a library" will be read and discussed.

On the last Wednesday in November the second Annual Dinner will take place, and all those desirous of being present should communicate at an early date with the Hon. Sec., Entertainment Sub-committee, Mr. W. B. Thorne, St. Bride Foundation, Bride Lane, E.C.

The third meeting will be on the second Wednesday in December at St. George-in-the-East, when Mr. F. M. Roberts, will read a paper. J. Passmore Edwards, Esq., has kindly consented to take the chair at this meeting.

In 1900 visits will be paid to various libraries at the invitation of the librarians, and in addition the remainder of the prize essays will be read and discussed.

The annual conversazione will take place about Easter, and in June the Committee have under consideration arrangements for a summer meeting of the pleasant type of the Wandsworth and Twickenham meetings of the two past sessions.

L.A.A.— NORTH-WESTERN BRANCH.

President: C. W. SUTTON, Esq., *Manchester Public Libraries.*

Hon. Sec. : P. D. GORDON, *Mudie's Library, Manchester.*

WINTER PROGRAMME.

The September meeting was held at Openshaw, but owing to inclement weather the attendance was not large. The library and technical school is one of the newest and largest of the Manchester libraries, and has some features which are not usual in public libraries. The recreation room is one of these, where chess, draughts, and dominoes may be indulged in, and in which smoking is permitted. The billiard room has three tables, and a small charge is made for each game, and there is here a bar where refreshments, such as Sir Wilfred Lawson delights in, may be obtained. Mr. Jones, the genial librarian and secretary, shewed the members over the building, and his descriptive remarks well merited the hearty vote of thanks accorded him at the close of the meeting.

The October meeting will be held at Chetham's College Library on Wednesday, October 18th, at 8 p.m., when the discussion on Quinn's Manual of Cataloguing will be opened.

THE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION AND EDUCATION.

"While I would caution you against too much political stuff in your magazine, let me pray you to strike a blow for education."

R. COBDEN, to Tait of Edinburgh.

At the recent Annual Meeting of the L.A., held in Manchester, the Report of the Council was presented, which also contained the Reports of the Committees and the L.A. Branches. Every assistant is interested in the Report of the Education Committee, which now fulfils the function of the former Education and Examination Committees.

During the year this Committee consisted of Miss James, Miss Petherbridge, Messrs. F. T. Barrett (*Glasgow*), F. T. Barrett (*Fulham*), F. J. Burgoyne, F. Campbell, R. C. Christie, P. Cowell,

C. T. Davis, W. E. Doubleday, R. Garnett, H. Guppy, H. Jones, J. Y. W. MacAlister, J. Macfarlane, J. Maclauchlan, W. May, J. J. Ogle, J. H. Quinn, H. D. Roberts, G. T. Shaw, C. W. Sutton, F. Turner, C. Welch, and W. H. K. Wright, together with Lord Crawford, Mr. Pacy and Mr. Tedder *ex-officio*. According to the return of attendances, Mr. Tedder and Mr. Roberts each have the highest possible record, 6 each, Mr. Guppy has 5, Messrs. Pacy, Burgoyne, and Quinn each have 3, Miss Petherbridge and Messrs. Davis and Jones each have 2, while Messrs. Doubleday, Macfarlane, and Turner each have 1.

The Committee state that 44 students entered for the five classes, "all of them employed in libraries (and, with one exception, in Free Public Libraries) in and around London." The examination results "were very satisfactory, and the Committee noted with much pleasure the large number of students who attended the examination, and consider it to be a proof of the increasing interest taken by assistants and others (*sic*) in the classes." The next official examination will be held in next December, and the Secretary of the Committee has been asked to draft a scheme by which the official examinations may be divided into senior and junior divisions.

The balance-sheet is a valuable document, and will repay careful study, because it shews that the fees of students do hardly more than cover printing and incidentals, leaving the expenses of the lecturers to be borne by the Library Association, and all this where the rooms are provided free of charge. The sooner that County funds available for technical lectures of this sort are granted, the more likely are we to have a permanent teaching system in London, which shall be a preparation for the permanent examination system.

RECEIPTS.				EXPENDITURE.			
	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Fees from Students ...	11	16	3	Printing and Stationery...	5	2	5
Balance	12	15	1	Advertising	0	10	6
				Contribution towards the			
				expenses of Lecturers ...	15	15	0
				Postages, Telegrams, and			
				Petty Expenses...	3	3	5
	£24	11	4		£24	11	4
				Dr. to Balance, £12 15s. 1d.			

The Reports of the Branch Associations contain the following items of special interest :—The N.W. records a successful summer school of 33 students, "a considerable advance on the figures of last year"; the North Midlands records that it "passed a resolution against the admission of persons not engaged in library work to the examinations"; and the Birmingham and District records that several papers have been read by "library assistants, from which class the membership has been considerably augmented."

Turning now to the Report of the Council, there is a special paragraph, headed "Education"—"one of the branches of the Association's work to which the Council attaches the highest importance." The Council urged upon the N.W. Branch "the advisability of reconsidering the determination which excludes from its classes those not actually engaged in library work. It is extremely desirable that all the classes held under the auspices of the Association should be carried through on uniform lines, and the Council after much deliberation, have decided against exclusion of any *bona fide* student from the classes arranged by their own Education Committee. While they have no desire to lay down hard and fast rules, it is to be wished that the other authority could adopt a policy which, if it errs at all, errs on the side of liberality."

When the report was presented at the business meeting, Mr. Shaw moved the deletion of this recommendation, and this was seconded by Mr. J. J. Ogle. This was carried by 45 votes to 42, but on a division being challenged 55 votes were recorded for deletion against 49 for the recommendation. The N.W. is to be congratulated on having gallantly held the position that it has taken up in the matter.

That there is grave difference of opinion in this matter between London and Manchester is unfortunately true, but all the London members of the Association are not in favour of throwing the classes open to all comers, and until London is unanimous it is hardly fitting that the Council should recommend a policy which past events have shown is contrary to the opinions of each and all of the L.A. branches, and which practically prevents it from receiving pecuniary aid for its own classes from the technical funds of the County. In fighting for a policy of "liberality" it is fighting for a shadow. By its own showing last year not a single person not employed in a library asked for education—and until such persons do present themselves the Council need hardly trouble to protect their interests. Lord Bacon clearly defined the true professional spirit when he said, "I hold every man a debtor to his profession; from the which as men of course do seek to receive countenance and profit, so ought they of duty to endeavour themselves by way of amends to be a help and ornament thereunto." This applies, the assistants hold, to the youngest boy and girl aspirant in librarianship: this applies, many librarians show by their acts, to the highest in the profession; and if librarians are willing and anxious to sacrifice their valuable time to be a help and ornament to librarianship they may rightfully insist that those who want their help shall help them by way of amends.

If a young man or woman desire countenance and profit in later years from librarianship, let him or her now be a present help to it. To obtain employment in a library in a subordinate capacity is easy enough, providing one puts up with its long hours,

laborious work, and very inadequate remuneration, and the Council of the Library Association may well ask itself if it ought not to demand of aspirants for education in librarianship, when it finds any, that they shall do a part in the work, by helping in the daily administration of a library.

THE ASSISTANTS' IDEALS.

By A. E. TILLING.

The late President Garfield in an address he once delivered to young men on success in life said—amongst other noteworthy things—"Young men be fit for more than you are doing." That is an ideal which every Assistant should endeavour to realise. Once realise it, and opportunity will not knock in vain at your door, you will be like those wise virgins who had their lamps trimmed and ready when the hour came.

Above all let no Assistant yield to the deadening influence of daily routine, a routine that necessarily involves the filling of inkpots, replacing worn out pens, cutting of books, &c., &c. These tasks have a tendency to reduce the doers to a dangerous state of mental stagnation. Fight against this condition of mind by keeping your faculties sharpened and interested in other and higher work. Study the readers of your own particular Library—what is this reader in quest of? what is the trend of that man's study? Be ever alert to help those who need help. Many people come to your Library totally unfamiliar with its treasures, the catalogue by reason of their not knowing the lines upon which it is compiled is a sealed book to them. How grateful will they be to the Assistant who, in a few words, either helps them to find the works on the subject nearest their hearts, or is able from his own knowledge of the Library to at once bring them the best authorities on the subject. The Assistant will be to them a real friend in need. The Assistant too will be rewarded by the inward "well done" of self-approval.

This knowing your Library is an ideal that should be ever present to each one and all of us. It involves time, but is it not time well spent? In fact it is a most profitable use of time in your training for librarianship. Become acquainted with your Library so that you may judge of its weakness as well as its strength. Libraries with few exceptions are rarely uniformly strong in all sections of literature. Some are strongest in history, travel and topography, others in classics and poetry, whilst art and science may be but poorly represented; hence their weakness.

Do not in this connection think it time wasted to walk round the shelves seeing and handling the standard works on every conceivable subject. I advisedly say handling, because it is the vital difference between a name and a thing. We know

things far better in the concrete than in the abstract, as a child knows a horse better by seeing it once, than by reading of it a thousand times. If in the Library you are now attached to you are familiar with the best authorities on any given subject, this knowledge will be invaluable to you all along your career, in any and every Library.

Strive amongst other things to cultivate a love of literature for its own sake as well as from a professional standpoint, glory in the thought that the noblest boast of England is her literature, for do we not speak the tongue that Shakespeare spake? Aim then to wield the pen yourselves, for every Librarian can elevate his calling and widen his opportunities of usefulness by being able to write. With so many tools to his hands it has often struck me what a paucity of literary craftsmen there are in the profession. It is difficult to say why. Is it that Librarians regard librarianship as a business? Yet if there is one profession more than another that should naturally gravitate to the production of literature, it is that of Librarian.

In the daily round of duties do not disdain trifles, for they lie at the root of perfection. One of the greatest artists the world has known—Michael Angelo—once said "trifles make perfection, but perfection is no trifle." It is the attention to the thousand and one apparently trivial details of library administration that bring about that much to be desired perfectly organised whole that redounds to the credit of chief and staff alike.

Finally, since progress, not marking time, is the very watchword of the age, let us see to it that we, the custodians of the intellectual wealth of nations, do not stagnate, but on the contrary let us be ever widening our own intellectual horizon, broadening our sympathies, and above all striving to realize, each one for himself, the famous aphorism—"know something of everything, and everything of something." In so far as we do this shall we make our libraries indeed and in truth the peoples' universities.

THE WILLIAM BLADES' LIBRARY.

The catalogue of the Blades' Library at St. Bride Foundation Institute has been issued, price one shilling. It consists of 186 well-printed pages, and contains an admirable portrait of Blades, together with a copy of the Commemoration Medal. Together with the 6d. catalogue of the Passmore Edwards' Library it should be in the hands of every library assistant. The libraries are open Monday to Friday from 12 to 3, and 5 to 9, Saturday 12 to 5.



MR. THOMAS GREENWOOD:

A NOTABLE EX-LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

To the present generation of library assistants no name in the library world is more familiar than that of Mr. Thomas Greenwood. Daily references are made to the books which he has written and compiled, and many L.A.A. members have the privilege of possessing copies presented to them by the author in 1896 and in 1897. Library assistants generally who have sent in essays for the 1899 prizes in connection with the L.A.A., will remember that Mr. Greenwood presented £20 for this purpose—and upon the eve of the pronouncement of the adjudicators upon the essays submitted, our portrait of the donor will be of especial interest.

It cannot be doubted that the great interest that Mr. Greenwood takes in library assistants is derived from the fact that he himself has endured the trials and tribulations, the pleasures and the profits of assistantship in a library; and that his generous gifts to us are prompted by a keen appreciation of the conditions of the work.

For some three years he was an assistant in the Public Libraries of Sheffield, under that much respected chief librarian, the late Thomas Hurst. He succeeded Mr. Heath (afterwards chief of the Derby Public Libraries), as branch librarian of the Upperthorpe Library. During the time of Mr. Greenwood's service in Sheffield, he gained actual and practical experience of the life of a library assistant, and though about 1873 he left librarianship to take up work in connection with trade journalism, his distinguished success in his new sphere of work has not lessened but strengthened his interest in libraries, librarians and assistants.

For the encouragement of those assistants who have started work in libraries with only an elementary education, it is worthy of note that Mr. Greenwood started in life with no costly or elaborate education. Born at Woodley, near Stockport, on May 9th, 1851, he was the posthumous son of a Chartist cotton-spinner, and the teaching of the village schools of the sixties was notoriously below the level of what it is now. But it was all the education that he had, except that it was supplemented by the kindly labours of a Congregational pastor, who gathered the elder lads of the village to him, and undertook their instruction in Latin, in history, and in other subjects. True it is that this "good man's life, His little, nameless, unremembered acts Of kindness and of love," have had a result far-reaching and wonderful. For when in 1884 Mr. Greenwood sought to commemorate this pastor's labours by founding a library to be called after him "The Urwick Library," the great trouble he was at to obtain information about the formation and management of libraries led to the publishing in 1886 of all he had collected in the first edition of "Free Public Libraries." Previous to this publication the volumes of Edwards, the pamphlets of Lady John Manners, and a few other odd essays, represented all the English library literature which attempted to give up-to-date results, and the new book soon went out of print. The 1887 edition consisted of 5,000 copies, and this, added to some millions of "Reasons" which were circulated by Mr. Greenwood, had much to do with the sudden outburst of adoptions of the Acts. With untiring devotion and with unselfish zeal, Mr. Greenwood conducted a huge correspondence with everyone seeking information—from town to town he went lecturing whenever asked, and for a time his house must have resembled rather the busy bureau of the secretary of a wealthy association rather than the residence of a whole-hearted enthusiast.

With a memory of his own young days, when he walked six miles to change his books at the Campfield Library, Manchester, and later when he spent his leisure evenings in the libraries of every town he visited—where they existed—he desired to see a library established everywhere and the means found for everyone to enjoy their use.

In 1890 the third edition of his work on libraries, from which he dropped the word “free,” appeared, and many of the towns added in the lists of libraries as compared with those published in 1886 owed the inception and establishment of their libraries to the zeal of Mr. Greenwood. Mr. Gladstone, in his speech at St. Martin’s, rightly termed Mr. Greenwood “an advanced and zealous advocate,” and such in truth he was and is.

There is little need to say more here of the work of Mr. Greenwood—of his “Museums and Art Galleries,” and his “Sunday School and Village Libraries,” which are the standard works on their subjects—or of his “Year Book,” except that we trust that before the new century dawns a new edition will be prepared which shall serve as a record of progress up to 1900, and an incentive to the new century to consolidate and complete the work.

Scott, Greenwood & Co., of Ludgate Hill, is the name of a firm which has made a speciality of technical text books and manuals, and of publishing technical trade journals, and which has achieved a reputation wherever English is spoken for its determination that the industrial arts shall be as well-equipped with manuals as the professions are; of it Mr. Greenwood is now the head.

Yet the activities of his business life and his unparalleled enthusiasm for libraries have left him time for literature, and “Grace Montrose: an unfashionable novel,” a volume of travels, and at least one other work show.

For some years, as a Library Commissioner at Stoke Newington, Mr. Greenwood gained practical experience of library work from another point of view than that of an assistant, and only his removal from London severed this connection.

In all his work Mr. Greenwood’s motto may be said to have been *thorough*; whatever he has set himself to do he has done with all his might; and his determined, quiet, and sincere work has told in a manner that affords a remarkable example to us all.

THE CHILD IN THE LIBRARY.

By G. E. ROEBUCK.

There are many suggestions circulating with reference to the above subject, and we learn from Mr. J. J. Ogle’s report that committees are realising the importance of this branch of library administration. There is, however, still a great deal to be done

in this direction. It is only right that all possible means should be taken to create and cater for a love of reading amongst the school-children of to-day, especially when we recognise in them the readers of the future. Yet there seems to be a somewhat unnecessary enthusiasm for the co-operation of the schools in this matter. Why should books be issued to the children at the schools? Surely the books can be better attended to, and the children more readily served at the library. If a sub-section of the juvenile literature in the library was made, consisting entirely of books suitable for children of (say) from 8 to 14 years of age, and children's tickets issued, as is at present done in several libraries, would not results as beneficial to the children be obtained as if circulation took place in the school-room? This arrangement dispenses with the necessity for boys' rooms and the expenses thereof, besides being fairer to the girls resident in the parish, who only too often have to content themselves with the periodicals which generally constitute the reading matter of the ladies' room, if indeed they are allowed admission. Forms for the children's tickets could be handed over to the local schoolmasters and mistresses, who would distribute them amongst such scholars as they thought likely to make use of them. Not only does this arrangement bring the children more in touch with the library, but it keeps the work in the hands of the library assistant. It is only natural that where school-circulation is in practice, the children are advised to read works other than fiction; perhaps they take them—it is doubtful whether they read them. Can children under the average lending department age be expected to take any interest in the travels of H. M. Stanley or the moral teachings of Smile's "Self-Help"? There should be no pressure brought to bear upon a child's reading; the natural craving for good wholesome fiction should be catered for, at least it teaches them *how* to read, and there is plenty of time for the introduction of "solid" literature when they are old enough to understand it. The subject is of great interest, and I feel sure a few remarks from fellow-members would prove of value.

ON THE MANIFOLDING OF ADDITIONS LISTS.

"Junior" is by no means the first person who has been bitten with the apparent ease of reproducing type-written matter by the aid of a cyclostyle, but if he is well advised he will think twice before he undertakes the herculean task of 200 copies of a twenty-page additions list. The reproduction of small quantities of written matter by the aid of the cyclostyle is justifiable because the method is cheap and handy. It manifestly would not pay to have printed agendas, minutes, or circulars of which not more than 50 copies are required. And occasionally when diagrams, drawings, etc., are to be reproduced it may pay to pull as many

as 500 copies, but for any ordinary printed matter where more than 100 copies are needed, print is the only method—if time allow.

Type-written catalogues never have the variety of type nor the clean appearance of printed ones, while typed matter takes up more space than printed. A practical disadvantage, too, is that the ink used sinks into the paper more than printer's ink does, so that sometimes it is all but impossible to reproduce matter on both sides of a sheet of paper. In the following figures, however, this has been disregarded, and both the manifolded and printed catalogues will be supposed "pulled" on both sides:—

<i>Manifolded Catalogue. 20 pp.</i>				£	s.	d.
1½ ream fcap., at 12s. per ream	...	...	...	0	15	0
2 quire stencil paper, at 4s. 6d. per quire	...	...	...	0	9	0
3 tubes ink, at 3s. 6d.	...	...	...	0	10	6
				£1	14	6

(Sale of 200 copies at 2d., £1 13s. 4d. Deficit, 1s. 2d.)

Printed Catalogue. 12 pp.

500 copies 8vo. 12 pp. and 3 pp. wrapper, £2 18s.

A typed list of 20 pages would probably compress into 12 pages printed, and a sale of 350 copies would more than cover the whole cost, while the labour would entirely be saved. "Junior" perhaps with others would argue that an assistant could do the manifolding in less busy times, but this could not be done, as to turn out manifolding well, the whole time and attention must be given to it. A manifolded list is at best an expedient, and if the extra sovereign of outlay that a printed substitute would cost cannot be found by the library funds, there are such things as advertisers, and the back at least of a printed list could be let with advantage.

"J. DOYLL."

NOTES AND NEWS.

CANTERBURY.—The Beanev Institute and Library was opened by the Mayor, Alderman G. Collard, to be used as the place of reception on the occasion of the visit of the British Association.

HAWARDEN.—The National Memorial Committee have voted £10,000 for the erection of a suitable library to contain Mr. Gladstone's collection of books, stored by him in a temporary building.

HORNSEY.—Mr. T. Johnston, the Chief Librarian, took up his residence at the Central Library on August 4th. The Lord Chancellor has consented to open the library on October 21st. A tender has been accepted for the building of the Stroud Green Branch, and plans are now being prepared for the Highgate Branch.

MILE END.—Negotiations with the People's Palace authorities have been finally abandoned, and a site for a public library is under consideration.

PETERHEAD.—The Rev. Dr. Stewart has presented in all about 700 volumes, and some 50 paintings and etchings, the latter of which as a memorial of the late Mrs. Stewart.

WHO WILL HELP?

An interesting suggestion was made at the Manchester meeting of the L.A. by Mr. J. J. Ogle, that a jubilee library fund be established out of which to place memorials of Edward Edwards at the Manchester and of William Ewart at the Liverpool Public Libraries, while providing a suitable memorial stone over Edwards' grave at Niton, Isle of Wight. In these days of memorials it is only fitting that the founders of the library movement should be commemorated.

KIPLING PRONOUNCED PROFANE!

A somewhat curious catalogue could be compiled of the various books that for various reasons have been cast out from libraries. The latest to be banned is Kipling—whose "Drums of the fore and aft" has been condemned by the Methodist Church Sunday School Library, Crawfordsville, Indiana, U.S.A., as "fairly reeking of profanity, etc."

A wise and weighty leader appears in "*Literature*" of September 2nd, which points out that the advertisement that the newspaper paragraphs give to books refused, possibly on just grounds, to be bought for popular libraries, creates a demand for these very books out of curiosity, and that if it is necessary on public grounds to refuse to circulate a book it is unwise to unduly draw attention to the cause of such refusal.

SPECIAL OFFER TO LIBRARIANS.

Mr. Joseph Edwards, of Wallasey, Cheshire, offers to send a five volume set of "The Labour Annual, the year book for Social and Political Reformers," to any library on receipt of a postal order for 4s. 6d. The volumes contain 200 portraits, 290 biographies, and numerous directories, and are well printed and compiled.

CORRESPONDENCE.

LECTURES AND LIBRARIES.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

In London we hear a lot about the exigencies of a limited rate, and the difficulty of properly conducting libraries in teeming centres on the proceeds of a bare penny. Some time since Battersea declared its rate inadequate to the support of

sufficient libraries, and sounded opinion as to the removal of the limit. Beyond the affording of a most effective weapon to the opponents of a library for St. Pancras, not much came out of the suggestion, and the idea seemed to have dropped. Recently, by some unexplained turn of affairs, the Battersea authority found itself with more money than it could spend on pure library business, and proposed a series of lectures on Shakespeare at a cost of £75. It asked for the free use of the Town Hall—which roughly speaking represented the same value from the general rate, but by a very large majority the Vestry threw out the recommendation of its Library Committee, and the lectures will not be given.

Mr. Willis, who led the opposition, is an educationist, and the defeat of the Library Committee is not a triumph for the Philistine, but an honest attempt to make the library keep to its quiet and unobtrusive work of distributing books, instead of entering upon a field which, in London, at any rate, is already sufficiently well covered. The question of lectures and libraries, and of how far a library committee may organise lectures and spend money out of the library rate on them, is one that might well be discussed in the columns of our own journal, and in asking you to publish this, I hope to have not trespassed too far on your space.

Yours truly,
BIBLIA.

THE LIBRARIAN OF FICTION :—A REQUEST.

"The power to see ourselves as others see us," is by the art of the novelist permitted nowadays, and while librarians frequently discuss fiction, they occasionally figure in it themselves in a way that is not connected with statistics. A kindly friend has compiled a list of novels in which references are made to librarians, and library assistants, or in which one of the characters is a librarian, with a suggestion that material for an interesting paper might be gathered from this source. If any reader will kindly send a post-card with the title of any work which contains similar matter to the Editor he will be much indebted.

THE OLDEST PUBLIC LIBRARY IN LONDON.

A landmark of the Public Library movement in London is about to be cleared away by the demolition of the old premises of the Westminster Public Library, on the east side of Great Smith Street, the site being required for the new Convocation Hall of the Church House.

This old building is interesting as being the first Public Library (under the Libraries' Acts) in London. Westminster adopted the Act of 1855 on the 19th May, 1856, no other parish or district in London following the example until 1883.

The premises were formerly those of the Westminster Literary Scientific, and Mechanics' Institution. The foundation stone was laid on the 30th July, 1840, by the Rev. Canon H. H. Milman, Rector of St. Margaret's, who afterwards became Dean of St. Paul's.

The Commissioners appointed to carry the Public Library Act into effect, being unable to find a more central and suitable site, purchased, by means of the Library Rate, the lease of the premises, furniture, and books of the Mechanics' Institution, and the building was re-opened on the 10th March, 1857, as the Westminster Public Library.

In August, 1893, the Library was transferred to a more commodious and convenient home, erected by the Commissioners on the opposite side of the street.

THE ORIGIN OF THE ENGLISH NOVEL.—I.

BY ARCHIBALD SPARKE.

The human mind is so constituted that it has a constant craving for knowledge and information which cannot always be acquired by personal experience. The sphere of any particular individual's action is so bounded that there is much outside of it that can only be imagined from the writings of those who have had the experience that is wanting.

The sum of the experience of travellers and adventurers is really the stock-in-trade of all those who write books for the purpose of instructing and amusing their fellow men.

Where actual experience has been wanting, imagination has taken its place ; and imagination is now generally expressed by what are popularly known as works of fiction.

To represent phases or conditions of life purely or in part imaginary as if they really existed cannot be said to be radically wrong. Everyday experience teaches us that events are constantly occurring which are stronger than anything that has ever been embodied in fiction. I am prepared to maintain that the happiness of the intellectual portion of the world has been increased enormously by the writers of fiction, who have placed before us illustrations and types of character in every rank and condition of life. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that the legitimate bounds in the use of fiction have occasionally been overstepped, and that the earlier writers of fiction never contemplated that their example would be followed for the purpose of accomplishing ends utterly opposed to the feelings which actuated their own work.

To instruct as well as amuse may be said to be the great aim of fiction, and the earliest users of the medium carefully restrained their imagination within the bounds of human possibility. Even when they went into the region of the

impossible it was always to "point a moral or to adorn a tale." The first traces that are to be found of instruction by means of fiction are met with in the writers of the Greek and Latin classics and in the Old Testament Scriptures.

Nothing in modern fiction has surpassed the brevity and the force of Jotham's parable of the trees selecting a king to rule over them; or of that by means of which Nathan brought home to David the heinous nature of his crime in the murder of Uriah the Hittite.

The Parables of the New Testament are fictional illustrations, but every character is a clear, well defined type of human nature.

It is impossible to estimate the influence that these parables have had on modern fiction, and the mediæval legends of Europe, sometimes foolish and often absurd, frequently had their origin in them.

Amid much that we cannot help wondering at in the present day, there are in these legends many beautiful thoughts and ideas, and indications of a system of Christian morality. The parables having reacted upon the national life of the countries in which they were read and understood, took on form and colour and substance from the life and feelings of the peoples. In England these legends found their best expression in the "Morte D'Arthur" of Sir Thomas Malory."

If space permitted it would be most interesting to trace how the legends of the "Trouvers" and "Troubadours" came to be presented in such a lucid manner as they are by Malory, but I am now mainly interested in calling attention to the great influence that his work has had upon the development of English Fiction. It was one of the first books printed by Caxton, and is in reality a magnificent epic poem, in which all the legends clustering round the Christian faith, and the life and conduct of the earlier Christians, are combined in one continuous tale.

In the present day Tennyson has made us familiar with portions of the great book of Malory, in his "Idyls of the King." But it is a question whether these do full justice to Sir Thomas Malory, though we give Tennyson the full meed of praise he deserves, for the book is a store-house from which many poets have derived inspiration. Dryden was ambitious enough to want to retell the tale, and Scott in his introduction to *Marmion* says:—

"The mightiest chiefs of British song
Scorned not such legends to prolong:
They gleam through Spenser's elfin dream,
And mix in Milton's heavenly theme,
And Dryden in immortal strain
Had raised the Table Round again,
But that a ribald King and court
Bade him toil on to make them sport:
Demanded for their niggard pay
Fit for their souls, a looser lay."

To be continued.

APPOINTMENTS.

CARTER, Mr. W. A., second assistant, Cripplegate, to be first assistant, Cripplegate.

HOBBS, Mr. Leonard, senior assistant, Rotherhithe, to be librarian, Rotherhithe.

OWEN, Mr. W. E., assistant, Central Lending Library, Cardiff, to be second assistant in the Leeds Institute of Science, Art, and Literature.

PARKER, Mr. Gill, assistant secretary, Leeds Institute of Science, Art, and Literature, to be curator of the Ruskin Museum, Sheffield.

ROCH, Mr. John, of Court Road, Barry Dock, to be librarian of Barry.

ROBERTS, Mr. C. R., to be second junior assistant, Cripplegate.

THOMPSON, Mr. J. E., first junior assistant, Cripplegate, to be second senior assistant, Cripplegate.

NOTICES.

DONATIONS.—The Treasurer begs to acknowledge with thanks the following donations:—Miss L. Toulmin Smith, 7s. 6d., and M. B. R., £1 1s. (*in completion of special donation, per the Editor, for the journal fund.*)

NEW MEMBERS.—The following are elected members:—Seniors, Mr. W. A. Carter (*Cripplegate*). Mr. H. J. Parkinson (*Warrington*). Juniors, Mr. P. W. Burbridge (*West Ham*). Mr. W. Burling (*Streatham*).

All communications as to the Library Assistants' Association, or as to this journal, should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, L. A. A., Old Brompton Road, S.W.

All matter for the November number should be sent in on or before the 15th October.





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